

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIE-00

INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /075 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8230

C O N F I D E N T I A L 4278

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, CU, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE TO RELAX SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA

REF: A. STATE 158486

B. PANAMA 3058

C. PANAMA 4259

SUMMARY. GOP DECISION MADE AT TIME OF PERUVIAN PRO-
POSAL LAST YEAR THAT EACH COUNTRY SHOULD BE FREE TO
MAKE ITS OWN DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA REMAINS
UNCHANGED. NEVERTHELESS, FOREIGN MINISTER WILL HAVE
TO CONSULT WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS BEFORE HE CAN GIVE
US GOP POSITION ON VENEZUELAN FORMULA. END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED TO RECEIVE ME AT NOON
TODAY, AUGUST 13, TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT.

2. I ASKED TACK WHETHER HE HAD RECEIVED ANY INFORMA-
TION ON THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE SINCE OUR MEETING
LAST WEEK (REF C). HE SAID THAT OAS DELEGATE PITY, WHO
HAS BEEN BACK IN WASHINGTON SINCE FRIDAY, STILL HAS
HEARD NOTHING AND THAT THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR
IN CARACAS HAS SENT A REPORT ON THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE
BUT IT HAS NOT YET ARRIVED. ACCORDINGLY, I GAVE TACK
A COPY OF THE TEXT OF THE VENEZUELAN DRAFT RESOLUTION
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AS CONTAINED IN CARACAS 6762 AND GAVE HIM TIME TO READ

IT.

3. I THEN SAID MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO INFORM HIM OF RESPONSE WE HAVE MADE TO VENEZUELA AND TO ASCERTAIN GOP ATTITUDE WITH RESEPCT TO VENEZUELAN FROMULA. AFTER REVIEWING THE MESSAGE WE HAVE CONVEYED TO VENEZUELA, WE BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE POSSIBLE VOTING LINE-UP. I MENTIONED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD MEXICO AND PERU HAD INDICATED SUPPORT. TACK ADDED ARGENTINA, BARBADOS, JAMICA AND TRINIDAD AS LIKELY SUPPORTERS. I SAID I SAW NO PROSPECT THAT VENEZUELA COULD ATTAIN THE TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED. TACK DID NOT TAKE ISSUE WITH MY ASSERTION OF A REQUIRED TWO-THIRDS VOTE. HE ASKED ABOUT COSTA RICA AND COLOMBIA. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD COSTA RICA HAD JURIDICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE VENEZUELAN FORMULA AND THAT COLOMBIA'S VOTE IS FAR FROM ASSURED. TACK COMMENTED THAT COLOMBIA IS NOW ENGAGED IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN BUT WITHOUT INDICATING THE EFFECT HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD HAVE ON THE COLOMBIAN POSITION.

4. I ASKED TACK ABOUT THE GOP ATTITUDE. HE REMINDED ME THAT AS HE HAD TOLD ME IN JUNE (REF B), THE GOP HAD DECIDED AT THE TIME OF THE PERUVIAN PROPOSAL LAST YEAR THAT EACH COUNTRY SHOULD BE FREE TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA. HE NOTED THAT PARAGRAPH (1) OF "RESOLVES" PORTION OF THE VENEZUELAN DRAFT IS PRECISELY TO THIS EFFECT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS WITH REGARD TO THE GOP POSITION ON THE SPECIFIC FORMULA PROPOSED BY VENEZUELA. HE REMINDED ME THAT, UNDER THE NEW PANAMANIAN CONSTITUTION, RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESTS WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS. I ASKED TACK WHETHER HE WAS QUITE CLEAR AS TO THE BASIS FOR OUR JUDGEMENT THAT THE "OPTIONAL" SANCTIONS CONCEPT IS BOTH POLITICALLY UNWISE AND JURIDICALLY UNSOUND. TACK SAID HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD OUR POSITION AND THE RATIONALE FOR IT. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSULT THE GENERAL AND BE IN TOURCH AS SOON AS THE PANAMANIAN POSITION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED.

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5. COMMENT: TACK'S SCRUPULOUSNESS ABOUT THE NEED TO CONSULT GENERAL TORRIJOS IS INTERESTING. THE CONSTITUTIONAL SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED SINCE MY JUNE DISCUSSION WITH HIM ABOUT THE PREVIOUS VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE. ALTHOUGH EQUALLY UNIFORMED ABOUT THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE AT THAT TIME, HE HAD NO HESITATION IN TELLING ME THAT, ON THE BASIS OF THE GOP DECISION MADE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERUVIAN PROPOSAL, PANAMA WOULD HAVE TO VOTE

FOR THE VENEZUELAN PROPOSAL. TACK MAY HAVE BEEN PUT
ON A TIGHTER REIN BY TORRIJOS (WE HAVE INTELLIGENCE
THAT TACK IS CONCERNED AT THE EROSION OF HIS POSITION
WITH TORRIJOS). ADDITIONALLY, HE MAY BE CONCERNED THAT
THE GOP POSITION ON THIS INITIATIVE COULD HAVE DOMESTIC
POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS AT A TIME WHEN TORRIJOS IS
FEELING PRESSURE TO FOLLOW UP HIS HOUSE CLEANING OF
COMMUNIST OFFICE HOLDERS IN CHIRIQUI PROVINCE WITH
FURTHER ACTIONS AGAINST COMMUNISTS AND FELLOW TRAVELERS
ELSEWHERE IN GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE WE
MUST COUNT PANAMA AMONG SUPPORTERS OF VENEZUELAN FORMULA.
THOMPSON

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